

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Engrossed Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 548

BY SENATORS GRADY AND WOELFEL

[Reported March 12, 2025, from the Committee on
Education]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §18-36-1, §18-36-2, §18-36-3, §18-36-4, §18-36-5, and §18-36-6, relating to
3 the creation of the Safety and Violence Education for Students Act; requiring all schools
4 serving students grades six through 12 to provide to students at least one hour, or one
5 standard class period, of evidence-based youth violence prevention training each school
6 year; requiring all schools serving students grades K-12 to provide to students at least one
7 hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based social inclusion training each school
8 year; requiring the West Virginia Department of Education to develop a list of evidence-
9 based trainings and materials to fulfill the youth violence prevention training and the social
10 inclusion training; allowing the West Virginia Department of Education to require all
11 schools serving grades K-12 to designate a student-led violence prevention club;
12 addressing costs associated with implementation; defining terms; and making
13 requirements of article voluntary for public charter schools and nonpublic schools.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 36. SAFETY AND VIOLENCE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS ACT.

§18-36-1. Student safety and violence prevention training.

1 (a) The Department of Education shall require that all schools serving students grades six
2 through 12 provide to students at least one hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based
3 youth violence prevention training each school year. The training may be delivered in-person,
4 live-virtual, or digitally.

5 (1) Training shall begin within two years of the development of the list required in this
6 section.

7 (2) Training programs which combine the training requirements set forth in this section,
8 may be used to fulfill the training requirements of this section.

9 **(b) The Department of Education shall, within one year of this law taking effect, develop a**
10 **list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to fulfill the**
11 **requirements of this section. Trainings shall, at a minimum, teach students the following:**

12 **(1) How to identify observable warning signs and signals of an individual who may be at**
13 **risk of harming themselves or others;**

14 **(2) The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help; and**

15 **(3) The steps they can take to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or**
16 **potentially harmful activity.**

17 **(c) The Department of Education shall make the list of evidence-based youth violence**
18 **prevention trainings, including no-cost programming, if any, publicly available on its website. The**
19 **Department of Education shall keep the list of available training options updated in a timely**
20 **manner by reviewing the list, at a minimum, every 36 months.**

§18-36-2. Student training on combatting social isolation.

1 **(a) The Department of Education shall require that all schools serving students grades K-**
2 **12 provide to students at least one hour, or one standard class period, of evidence-based training**
3 **on combatting social isolation each school year. The training may be delivered in-person, live-**
4 **virtual, or digitally.**

5 **(1) Training shall begin within two years of the development of the list required in this**
6 **section.**

7 **(b) The Department of Education shall, within one year of this law taking effect, develop a**
8 **list of evidence-based trainings and materials, including no-cost programming, if any, to fulfill the**
9 **requirements of this section. Trainings shall, at a minimum, teach students the following:**

10 **(1) What social isolation is and how to identify social isolation in others;**

11 **(2) The importance of taking social isolation seriously and seeking help for peers; and**

12 **(3) How to utilize strategies to combat social isolation in the classroom and community**
13 **and to establish connections with peers.**

14 (c) The Department of Education shall make the list of evidence-based trainings on
15 combatting social isolation, including no-cost programing, if any, publicly available on its website.
16 The Department of Education shall keep the list of available training options updated in a timely
17 manner by reviewing the list, at a minimum, every 36 months.

§18-36-3. Student-led violence prevention clubs.

1 (a) The Department of Education may require all schools serving students grades K-12 to
2 designate a student-led violence prevention club. Any club designated pursuant to this section
3 shall:

4 (1) Be open to all members of the student body; and

5 (2) Have at least one identified adult advisor.

6 (b) Any student violence prevention club designated pursuant to this section shall, at a
7 minimum, do at least one of the following:

8 (1) Sustain awareness activities related to suicide prevention, violence prevention, or
9 trainings on combatting social isolation; and

10 (2) Foster opportunities for student leadership development.

§18-36-4. State and federal funding.

1 To offset any costs associated with the implementation of the requirements of this article,
2 the Department of Education is encouraged to apply for any state or federal funding made
3 available to it for the purposes of increasing school safety.

§18-36-5. Definitions.

1 "Department of Education" means the West Virginia Department of Education.

2 "Evidence-based" as used in this article means a program or practice that:

3 (1) Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on relevant outcomes based on:

4 (A) Strong evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented
5 experimental study;

6 (B) Moderate evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-
7 experimental study; or

8 (C) Promising evidence from not less than one well-designed and well-implemented
9 correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or

10 (2) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation
11 that such program or practice, is likely to improve relevant outcomes, and includes ongoing efforts
12 to examine the effects of the program or practice.

§18-36-6. Voluntary application for public charter schools and nonpublic schools.

1 The requirements of this article are voluntary for public charter schools and nonpublic
2 schools.